

Wine Spectator Insider

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MAESTROS OF BAROLO LEAD THE WAY IN THIS WEEK'S *WINE SPECTATOR INSIDER*, but there's a good helping of quality wines here for value seekers, too. Five classic Barolos, up to 96 points, make the most of a fine 2008 vintage; these include Bruno Giacosa's Falletto vineyard bottling and picks from Fontanafredda, Massolino, Schiavenza and Pira.

Cabernet fans can peruse versions from Washington and Chile, such as the standouts from Adams Bench and Fidelitas in the former and Concha y Toro in the latter. Nine of the wines in this report check in at \$40 or less, for those on a wine budget after the holidays, and even a few Barolos will set you back less than \$50. Be sure to see the six Hot Wines on page 4.

CHILE

VIÑA ERRÁZURIZ

Syrah Aconcagua Valley La Cumbre 2009

92 points | \$110 | 75 cases imported | Red

This dark yet expressive red offers a rich core of roasted plum, macerated fig and game notes supported by finely textured tannins that lift the broad finish as hints of tar and spice box linger. Drink now through 2018.—*N.W.*

CONCHA Y TORO

Cabernet Sauvignon Puente Alto Marqués de Casa Concha 2010

91 points | \$22 | 5,000 cases imported | Red

A compact yet suave red, marked with silky layers of cassis and wild berry fruit that mingle with well-integrated hints of graphite, tobacco and toasty oak. Drink now through 2018.—*N.W.*

VIÑEDOS EMILIANA

Gê Colchagua Valley 2009

91 points | \$92 | 100 cases imported | Red

Macerated black cherry, dark plum skin and roasted game notes are featured in full force in this rich red, with layers of graphite, cedar and dusky spices unfolding on the dark finish. Syrah, Carménère and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2017.—*N.W.*

KINGSTON FAMILY

Pinot Noir Casablanca Valley Alazan 2011

91 points | \$32 | 280 cases imported | Red

This dense version displays a core of black cherry skin and wild berry notes that are well-integrated with juicy acidity and light tannins. Hints of grilled herb and hot stone settle in the long finish. Needs some time to unwind. Best from 2014 through 2018.—*N.W.*

VIÑA ERRÁZURIZ

Syrah Aconcagua Valley Costa 2010

90 points | \$20 | 100 cases imported | Red

A racy, pure red, sporting fresh layers of plum skin, raspberry and cassis tightly wound with hints of game, wild flowers and spice, with hints of toasty oak. Drink now through 2016.—*N.W.*

KINGSTON FAMILY

Pinot Noir Casablanca Valley Alazan CJ's Barrel 2011

90 points | \$38 | 48 cases imported | Red

On the jammy side, with macerated black cherry and blackberry defining this dark, brutish Pinot, which slowly opens up with hints of smoke, olive and underbrush to the long, savory finish. Drink now through 2018.—*N.W.*

PIEDMONT BAROLO

LUIGI BAUDANA

Barolo 2008

94 points | \$52 | 239 cases made | Red

An expression of pure cherry and raspberry, with supporting roles from eucalyptus and tobacco, this red is harmonious and fresh, with a fine lingering finish. The tannins are ripe, and this should be approachable soon. Best from 2015 through 2030.—*B.S.*

ATTILIO GHISOLFI

Barolo Bussia Bricco Visette 2008

94 points | \$80 | 470 cases made | Red

Licorice and cherry vie for attention in this charming red, with spice and tar adding grace notes. Pure, fresh and almost seamless, except for the firm tannins gripping the finish. Offers a fine spice and licorice aftertaste. Best from 2016 through 2035.—*B.S.*

MASSOLINO

Barolo Vigna Rionda Riserva 2006

94 points | \$140 | 200 cases imported | Red

A fresh, bracing red, whose assertive structure sets the pace for pure floral, cherry, leather, underbrush, mint and tobacco flavors. This has an iron note, with muscular tannins and a long, long finish. Really shows the density of the vintage. Best from 2015 through 2028.—*B.S.*

PIRA

Barolo Cannubi 2008

94 points | \$105 | 327 cases made | Red

Cherry, raspberry and tobacco flavors highlight this intense red, which is fresh and steely in structure, turning more elegant as it plays out on the finish. A licorice note wraps it up. Really builds from beginning to end. Best from 2016 through 2032.—*B.S.*

G.D. VAJRA

Barolo Albe 2008

94 points | \$42 | 1,850 cases imported | Red

The rose, strawberry and cherry aromas and flavors are beautifully displayed on the elegant frame in this pure and delicately wrought red, which shows harmony and depth. The fine lingering finish expresses energy, with a mineral element. Best from 2015 through 2032.—*B.S.*

MASSOLINO

Barolo Margheria 2008

93 points | \$95 | 150 cases imported | Red

This is chock full of tobacco, underbrush and menthol notes, but also strawberry and raspberry flavors. Trim and racy in character, with muscular tannins. A traditional Barolo that needs time or a lot of air to show its best. Best from 2016 through 2035.—*B.S.*

MASSOLINO

Barolo Parafada 2008

93 points | \$95 | 150 cases imported | Red

Black cherry, raspberry, smoke and maduro tobacco flavors mingle in this traditionally styled red, but there's also a woody underbrush note. Though elegant, this is well-structured and needs air to show its balance. Best from 2016 through 2035.—*B.S.*

FRATELLI ODDERO

Barolo Bussia Soprana Vigna Mondoca 2007

93 points | \$105 | 100 cases imported | Red

A perfumed red, featuring licorice, rose, menthol and underbrush aromas, with flavors of leather and tar. The fruit has faded to dried cherry, and there's sweetness that balances the dusty tannins on the finish. Fine length. Best from 2016 through 2032.—*B.S.*

PALLADINO

Barolo Parafada 2008

93 points | \$64 | 500 cases made | Red

This is showing a lot of sweet licorice, cherry, plum and sandalwood aromas and flavors, along with tobacco and black tea. The tannins offer support without being too intrusive, but this needs time for all the elements to knit together. Best from 2016 through 2035.—*B.S.*

GIOVANNI ROSSO

Barolo Tommaso Canale Vigna Rionda 2008

93 points | \$132 | 30 cases imported | Red

Great finesse marks this dense, fruit-filled red. Cherry, raspberry, eucalyptus, tar and tobacco ride the bright acidity and firm tannins, and this kicks into overdrive on the finish, which is full of spice and tobacco notes. Best from 2016 through 2035.—*B.S.*

MASSOLINO

Barolo 2008

92 points | \$55 | 1,000 cases imported | Red

Cherry, eucalyptus and licorice flavors punctuate this juicy red, whose sinewy texture amplifies the tannins, finishing long. Improves with aeration, so decant if you must drink now. Best from 2015 through 2022.—*B.S.*

PALLADINO

Barolo Serralunga 2008

92 points | \$48 | 3,000 cases made | Red

With its precision balance, this red easily showcases the sweet cherry, raspberry and tobacco flavors. Seems almost light in weight and elegant, but the stern tannins say otherwise. Shows fine length, with a licorice aftertaste. Best from 2015 through 2032.—*B.S.*

FONTANAFREDDA

Barolo di Serralunga d'Alba 2008

91 points | \$45 | 15,000 cases made | Red

There's a hard, iron edge to this red, softened somewhat by ripe cherry and strawberry flavors. Licorice and earth accents chime in as this unfolds to the long finish. Just a bit dry in the end. Best from 2016 through 2029.—*B.S.*

WASHINGTON

ADAMS BENCH

Cabernet Sauvignon Horse Heaven Hills Mays Discovery Vineyard 2009
93 points | \$52 | 97 cases made | Red

Focused, expressive and distinctive for its Earl Grey tea, brioche and pepper overtones around a supple core of black currant and blackberry fruit that slides harmoniously into the finish against polished tannins. Best from 2014 through 2019.—*H.S.*

FIDELITAS

Cabernet Sauvignon Red Mountain Ciel du Cheval Vineyard 2009
93 points | \$60 | 310 cases made | Red

Ripe and generous, this polished red is brimming with blackberry, cassis, bay leaf and toasted brioche flavors that linger easily on the long finish. Fine tannins underline but don't overpower. Drink now through 2020.—*H.S.*

ROBERT RAMSAY

Cabernet Sauvignon Snipes Mountain Upland Vineyards 2009
93 points | \$30 | 139 cases made | Red

Fresh and vibrant, this is juicy with currant, cherry and delicate herb flavors, offering a classic profile that sings harmoniously on the long, expressive finish. Drink now through 2017.—*H.S.*

COUGAR CREST

Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley Reserve 2007
92 points | \$55 | 291 cases made | Red

Open-textured and generous, with sassafras and tea leaf overtones to the tightly wound berry flavors, playing against modest tannins as the finish lingers harmoniously. Drink now through 2017.—*H.S.*

TWO VINTNERS

Merlot Walla Walla Valley Pepper Bridge Vineyard 2009
92 points | \$29 | 152 cases made | Red

This has a sense of refinement to the supple plum and currant fruit flavors, nicely shaded with hints of mineral and floral character, melding with firm but well-integrated tannins. Finishes with finesse and power. Best from 2015 through 2020.—*H.S.*

COVINGTON

Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley 2009
91 points | \$35 | 225 cases made | Red

Firm tannins underpin a lively, generous burst of raspberry, pomegranate and white pepper flavors, riding easily past hints of sage and bay leaf. Needs time to come together, but the balance is there. Best from 2015 through 2019.—*H.S.*

MARK RYAN

Cabernet Sauvignon Red Mountain Lonely Heart 2009
91 points | \$80 | 225 cases made | Red

Tannins swarm around the focused, detailed black cherry, grilled meat and spice flavors, which prevail on the expressive finish. Needs rich food to compensate for the tannins. Best after 2015.—*H.S.*

MARKET

Cabernet Sauvignon Red Mountain Acquisition 2009
91 points | \$49 | 96 cases made | Red

Supple in texture, this is generous with its dark berry, cassis, herbal and floral aromas and flavors, coming together seamlessly on the finish. Shows presence and grace. Drink now through 2018.—*H.S.*

JANUIK

Cabernet Sauvignon Red Mountain Ciel Du Cheval Vineyard 2009
90 points | \$45 | 171 cases made | Red

Firm and chewy, with black pepper and licorice flavors on a medium-weight frame, underlined with cherry and spice as the finish persists. Best from 2014 through 2018.—*H.S.*

JANUIK

Cabernet Sauvignon Wahluke Slope Weinbau Vineyard 2009
90 points | \$40 | 227 cases made | Red

Firm in texture, this is expressive with its currant, black tea, licorice and pepper flavors, lingering harmoniously against refined tannins. Best from 2015 through 2019.—*H.S.*

SEVEN HILLS

Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley 2010
90 points | \$30 | 1,260 cases made | Red

Supple, focused and appealing for the floral, vaguely meaty overtones to the nicely detailed blackberry and dark plum fruit. Finishes with finesse. Drink now through 2016.—*H.S.*

HOT WINES

These are the most exciting discoveries from our editors' most recent tastings, published exclusively in *Wine Spectator Insider*. They are high-scoring, low-production wines from around the world that may be difficult to find, but are worth seeking out.

FALLETTO DI BRUNO GIACOSA

Barolo Falletto 2008

96 points | \$250 | 430 cases imported | Red

Warm and chewy, this red exhibits cedar, sandalwood, tobacco and leather accents enhancing the core of cherry and raspberry. As this plays out on the palate, the wine turns more supple and vibrant, building to the long, expansive finish. Best from 2016 through 2035. *From Italy.—B.S.*

FONTANAFREDDA

Barolo La Rosa 2008

95 points | \$96 | 1,500 cases made | Red

Fine harmony and sweet cherry and berry flavors are the hallmarks of this rich Barolo. Licorice, spice and tobacco flavors add depth as it stays focused and persistent through the finish. The tannins are ripe and well-integrated. Best from 2015 through 2033. *From Italy.—B.S.*

MASSOLINO

Barolo Parussi 2008

95 points | \$95 | 100 cases imported | Red

This red is pure and silky in texture as the cherry, currant, floral and mineral flavors unfold. Though firm and taut, there's intense energy, with an incredible underpinning of mineral that leaves the palate with a salty, tactile impression. Best from 2016 through 2035. *From Italy.—B.S.*

PIRA

Barolo Via Nuova 2008

95 points | \$96 | 390 cases made | Red

This red boasts pure cherry, plum, leather and tobacco notes, with hints of mint and eucalyptus. Vibrant and harmonious, with firm, ripe tannins for support. The finish goes on and on, exuding fruit, flowers and mineral accents. Best from 2015 through 2035. *From Italy.—B.S.*

SCHIAVENZA

Barolo Serralunga 2008

95 points | \$50 | 150 cases imported | Red

This alluring red combines the pure racy cherry and floral fruit of the vintage with a firm, linear structure. The result is electric, with energy pulsing through as this builds to a lingering aftertaste. Shows terrific harmony and finesse. Best from 2015 through 2035. *From Italy.—B.S.*

CONCHA Y TORO

Cabernet Sauvignon Puente Alto Don Melchor 2009

94 points | \$95 | 2,500 cases imported | Red

This muscular red packs a melange of roasted plum, cassis and macerated wild berry on a full-bodied frame. There's plenty of fresh acidity and tannic structure, as the long finish unwinds with layers of maduro tobacco and humus, with a grace note of wild flowers. Best from 2014 through 2020. *From Chile.—N.W.*

WINE SPECTATOR'S TASTERS

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Wine Spectator's tasting staff includes 12 people in two offices. They work together to review more than 18,000 wines each year, more than any other publication. Together, our six senior tasters count more than 140 years of tasting experience.

We always taste wine blind in our offices in Napa and New York. This is your guarantee that our reviews are fair and objective, and that a wine's reputation or price does not influence its score. Each editor specializes in the wines of specific regions; their initials identify the taster of each wine reviewed. We score wines using the 100-point scale, explained below.

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Wine Spectator's 100-Point Scale

95-100	Classic
90-94	Outstanding
85-89	Very good
80-84	Good
75-79	Mediocre
50-74	Not recommended